

Age Demands Action for Rights

Campaign Toolkit



ADA
Age Demands Action

HelpAge
International
global network

Age Demands Action is a HelpAge global network campaign

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On 15th June, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Introduction

June 15 is the United Nations World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). On this day, people hold events around the world to raise awareness of elder abuse, and highlight ways to reduce/challenge it.

Elder abuse whether physical, psychological, financial, sexual or a form of neglect is a violation of older people's human rights.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is an opportunity to put pressure on governments to prove their commitment to enhancing and protecting the rights of older people. One way of doing this on an international level is for governments to actively participate in discussions taking place at the UN which will decide whether and how to establish new international protection measures for older people, such as a new international convention.

Age Demands Action for Rights

When people get older, they do not lose their universal human rights. Rights empower individuals to actively participate in social, economic, cultural and political life. Rights empower people to take charge of their own affairs and decide how they wish to live. Rights empower people to give an opinion that is judged of equal merit to anyone else's opinion. Rights ensure that all people, whether old or young are treated with dignity.

Age discrimination and ageism deny the right of an older person to live a full life. Neglecting to challenge that discrimination also violates that right. Unfortunately this is all too common across the world, but it could change.

New UN mechanisms would not only protect older people from abuse and violence, but also empower older people to live their lives as fully as possible.

If older people's rights were better respected and they were supported to live their lives as fully as possible, society as a whole would benefit. There would be less poverty, local economies would improve and there would be positive knock-on effects in health, not just of older people, but of younger people who live with them too.

A unique opportunity

The UN has decided to discuss whether and how to protect and promote the rights of older people by setting up the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. It is the only place where the rights of older people are discussed on a global level, by national government representatives who have the power to bring about change.

The working group was established in 2010 and has had two meetings so far. It is due to meet again in August this year. But so far, participation in the meetings has been low and mainly limited to some Latin American and European governments, who together only represent 25% of the global population. This is not enough.

We believe all governments in all regions should take part in the discussions to represent all the older people of today and tomorrow.

What you can do

The only existing route to the convention is under threat and we need to stop it from disappearing!

We have a short window of opportunity to improve political participation at the OEWG on Ageing meeting in August. We need to put pressure on national ministries responsible for ageing to ask their governments to send a representative to the OEWG meeting in August 2012. We can use national human rights institutes as allies in this fight.

We want governments to be there in August!

In order to make ADA for Rights a success, we will be collecting signatures for the ADA petition and supporting delegations of older people to meet key officials who can support the OEWG discussions.

We have a short window of opportunity to improve government participation at the Open-ended Working Group meeting in August. To do this you can:

- Ask your government to send a human rights representative to the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in New York from 21-24 August
- If they cannot attend, ask them to submit a statement supporting the establishment of international human rights mechanisms via the Bureau of representatives from the member states which manage the work (Argentina, Luxembourg, Qatar and Albania. There is no Bureau member from Africa yet).

- If you are from an African country, insist that someone from your country or region attends. Suggest that they become the regional leaders in ageing, and assume the position of Bureau member.
- Show that aging is a human rights issue and provide information on discrimination against older people and rights' violations to government representatives in capital cities and to their UN Missions in New York
- Tell your government that you think the introduction of new UN mechanisms, such as a Special Rapporteur on the rights of older people or regular studies and meetings on ageing or a new Convention will help lessen discrimination in your country but also in others.
- Ask to meet with a representative in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who decides what the government says in New York to discuss issues that you think need to be raised at the meeting in August.
- Organise a meeting with members of other civil society groups and your National Human Rights Institution if there is one and discuss how to mobilise more people to help convince the government of the importance of participating.

We want every government to at the Open-ended Working Group meeting in August

ADA Petition

Over the past five years, ADA campaigners have been collecting signatures for the Age Demands Action petition which calls on governments and the international community to actively include older people in development policies at home and internationally. The petition is part of our global campaign pushing for a UN convention on older people's rights. ADA for Rights is the opportunity to demonstrate that people around the world are calling for a UN convention and that it is needed. The petition is a resource to evidence that people across the world are putting pressure for the rights of all older people to be protected by governments.

Over 32,000 people from more than 130 countries have signed our Age Demands Action petition and we need at least 50,000 by the end of June. The petition will be presented in support of the UN Convention.

The petition can be found on the [Age Demands Action website](#) or in Annex 3 of this manual. The petition is translated in French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Swahili and Bulgarian. If you want to translate the petition in your language then please email us.

Tips on how to use the petition can be found below.

Voices of older people

At its heart, Age Demands Action (ADA) is about bringing older people together to discuss and decide on the issues that directly affect them. Older people are the best activists on ageing issues and the strongest way to demonstrate they are active is for them to act as passionate and energetic advocates for change in their countries. We are asking these delegations to meet politicians and work with representatives from National Human Rights Institutions to ask them to support the OEWG discussions.



Taking Action

Preparing for follow-up action

To prepare for the ADA on Rights campaign in your country we recommend that you organize a meeting with older people and the delegation that took part in the 2011 ADA. It is important that the delegation once again takes a central role in organising the campaign as they prepare to meet the politician or representative from a national human rights institution. A public meeting can help gain wider public support and raise awareness about the rights demands that will be presented to the politician. These meetings provide a forum for interaction and the building of momentum behind the rights demands so that they can have the greatest possible impact during the day of action on **15 June, Elder Abuse Awareness Day**.

You can structure the meeting in various ways. The format of these planning sessions is up to you and depends on who will be there and what you will discuss. However it is important to invite both the general public and older people that were part of the 2011 campaign to the meeting so that they can share their experiences.

During the planning meeting

During the planning meeting, older people should receive information about the convention and what the core messages are in the campaign (see Annex 1). The delegation should agree on a strategy that will maximise the effectiveness of their meeting. Here is how the delegation can prepare for the meeting:

- **Review the issue around OEWG and why a Convention is needed.**
- **Develop a list of questions** and messages that the **delegation** will ask the politician, as well as request the politician to send a representative to the OEWG at the UN in New York.
- **Discuss** the importance of the global Age Demands Action petition and agree on petition targets to gather signatures.
- **Bring** the petition to the table ask older people to **collect** signatures in their neighborhood.
- **Suggest** that older people take the petition to meetings and events where they expect there will be people who support it.
- Prepare testimony: Give personal examples of a how a policy (or lack of) directly affects people and an example of how changes would improve people's lives.
- **Prepare materials** that the politician can refer to later. A **one-page brief** will give a concise background to the issue, and will clearly describe the changes they are being called on to make.

A quick call doesn't hurt

A quick **phone call by an ADA leader** to the government office can be effective to get you ready and prepare the politicians for the meeting you plan to organise with them. One phone call can stick out in their mind, showing that the delegation respects the politicians time and that this issue is **important** to the older people in the country.

- Have the ADA leader(s) introduce themselves to the official, telling them that they are part of the ADA campaign.
- Give the reason for the call, and explain what concerns older people.
- Let the politician know that this issue matters to the older people and that they want to discuss it in person at a meeting.
- It is important to show that the delegation is willing to work with the decision maker to reach the successful outcomes.

At the meeting

Once a meeting is arranged we recommend these simple guidelines:

- **Present the background information** in a clear and concise way, explaining how important OEWG is to older people and what a Convention will do to change people's lives.
- **State the** exact nature of your concern and precisely what you are asking the politician to do.
- Insist on a **straight answer** to your questions (the meeting should only finish when you are clear about the politician's position).
- **Bring** the petition to the table ask the politicians to sign it.
- If the politician agrees with the delegation, **get it in writing** (you may ask them to sign a pledge that you have prepared. It is a good idea to take a photo of this taking place).
- Have a **calm and respectful dialogue**. The delegation should show that they are willing to work with the decision maker.
- **Follow up**. Write a letter thanking the decision maker for meeting with the older people. In the letter, summarise any commitments that were made, and ask for an update on what has been done.

Tips for collecting petition signatures

The petition could spark the interest of the public and the government or national human rights institutions representatives if presented in advance. Attracting the support of a well-known public figure or politician willing to sign the petition is likely to draw more attention for the petition and the wider campaign. Here are some tips on how you can collect petition signatures.

- Print and make copies of the petition
- Translate the petition into the most commonly spoken language in your country or use the translated petitions we have online.

- You can add a cover letter to the petition explaining the urgent need for us to collect signatures from now until end of June.
- Distribute the petition and collect as many signatures as possible. You can ask members of your network, OPA members, politicians and all concerned citizens to sign the petition.
- You can also promote in online through your website, online blogs and contacts. Tell people that they can sign the petition by visiting our website www.agedemandsaction.org

Once you collected the signatures, you can:

- Send copies to HelpAge International in London so they can keep count (campaigns@helpage.org)
- Please let the campaigns team at HelpAge International (campaigns@helpage.org) know if any celebrities or politicians have signed the petition.
- Submit the petition sheets online at www.agedemandsaction.org

Over the years, ADA campaigners have come up with some innovative ways to collect signatures for the global petition. The petition will be used as part of the campaign for a UN convention on the rights of older people. In countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Ukraine, campaigners have collected thousands of signatures for the petition. In Haiti OPA's from across the country were mobilised to collect over 12,000 signatures.

Case study: Collecting signatures in South Korea

In South Korea, members of the OPA's in Sung Nam, Kwanak and Bucheon worked with HelpAge Korea to collect nearly 1,500 signatures as part of ADA in 2011. Campaigners engaged employees of major financial institutions based in Seoul such as PCA Life, PCA Asset, CANA and Kukmin Bank. These employees went around their offices collecting signatures from their colleagues.

Elsewhere, campaigners took to the streets, parks and train stations of Seoul to collect signatures from members of the public.



Raising awareness

Raising awareness is a fundamental part Age Demands Action campaigning. In addition to the delegation meeting a key politician, there should be public awareness events organised in country where large amount of petitions can be collected easily. The events should grab media attention and inspire people that are not in the campaign to support the UN Convention. The public awareness events can include; campaigners performing street theatre, taking part in solidarity runs, marching across the city or forming human chain in front of government buildings.

This is the best way to collect many petition signatures during the day so please think about a public awareness event that will work best in your country.

Working with the media

Working with the media can also be an important component to your rights campaign. It can increase public awareness and can also catch the attention of the targeted officials. You may find yourself engaging with the media through writing press releases and letters to the editor, or offering information to a journalist. The media may also contact you for an interview. It's important to know how to approach the media and how to get your voice heard through newspapers, television, and the radio.



Here are some simple steps:

- You should approach newspapers first because TV and radio journalists often get their stories from the newspaper. They are also able to go more in-depth on a topic.
- Mondays and Fridays are generally slow news days, so approaching a newspaper on Sunday or Thursday is best.
- Send press releases following meetings with the decision maker (make sure that the delegation lets the decision maker know that the meeting is "on the record" and you will be in contact with media), after newsworthy events relating to your issue, and before events that you or your group plan.

Share your stories

Your campaigns are inspiring and a vital part of global initiative to get UN convention on older people's rights. We want to draw attention to your campaign to ensure that people recognise that rights are something that older people are taking action on. To make sure that everyone is aware about your fantastic campaign actions, we would like to hear from the campaigners. Make sure to take pictures during the campaign so we can profile the campaign.

Ideas of pictures we would like to receive:

- Older people speaking with the politician
- Politician signing ADA petition
- Older people shaking hands with the politician
- People signing petitions
- Portrait picture of the ADA leaders

Ideas of videos we would like to receive:

- Meetings with government official
- Reflection from older people about the day of action

How will this information be used?

At a global level, we will use the petition to address high level officials at the UN who have a significant role to play in discussions about the proposed UN convention. We aim to reach our target of 50,000 petition signatures and share it with government officials and development partners at one of the events we will be organising this year. We also encourage you to use the petition nationally to support your meetings with decision makers.

1 October 2012 will see ten years since the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted at the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing. On this date, HelpAge International and the United Nations Population Fund will launch a historic report on the state of the world's older people.

There will be a number of key events to launch this report and events at the UN will provide an opportunity to bring awareness to the ADA petition and the thousands calling for a convention on older people's rights.



Annex 1: What the ADA for Rights campaign is calling for

ADA for Rights is calling for a new convention on the rights of older people. The UN Open-ended Working Group is where governments are discussing this.

Ageing is a human rights issue. Older men and women have the same rights as everyone else: we are all born equal and this does not change as we grow older. Despite this older people continue to face discrimination and are denied their rights.

Older people's rights are protected under international human rights law but specific reference to older people's rights is rare and there is little understanding about how human rights apply to older people. There are commitments to human rights in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) but it is not a human rights treaty and governments have no legal obligation to implement any of the recommendations in it.

As a result governments pay little attention to older people's rights. Most governments do not see older people as rights holders with rights and responsibilities but only as recipients of welfare. This has to change.

A new convention on the rights of older people is necessary to bring about this change. A new UN convention would provide governments with a legal framework, guidance and support to help them protect older people's rights in our increasingly ageing societies.

A convention would:

- oblige governments to adopt non-discriminatory laws and allocate their budget more fairly across different age groups.
- require governments to collect data broken down by age to help inform policy decisions.
- encourage governments to design age-sensitive programmes, and train service providers, eg health workers, on age-related issues.
- encourage the government to unroll national campaigns to reduce casual discrimination of older people and to ensure older people are treated in a dignified and respected manner
- provide a system to monitor government action and hold them to account for their actions.

While UN conventions are agreed by governments, support cannot be built without the backing and advocacy of older campaigners. Civil society organisations play a key role in making this happen and in holding governments to account for the decisions they make.

For this reason, our HelpAge global network is working hard to make this happen. Come and support us now; join our ADA on Rights campaign!

More governments must get involved

Ageing is a global phenomenon and so any discussions about how best to protect and promote the rights of older people needs global participation.

The rights of older people in your country will not be discussed unless your government sends a representative to talk about them.

If your government does not participate, two things could happen. First, decisions could be taken at an international level affecting the entire world's population that your government does not know about and has not influenced. We do not think they want that to happen.

And second, if not enough governments participate, it may send a message that the world does not think the rights of older people are important enough to protect and promote. If more governments do not take part in an active and constructive manner, there is a danger that a decision will be taken to cease all discussions. If that happens,

governments are neglecting to challenge discrimination that older people suffer on a daily basis around the world.

Our rights do not change as we grow older. What does change is that older women and men are considered to be inherently less valuable to society. Don't let this be true of your national government: don't let them be the ones who fail to value or represent their own citizens.

Annex 2: What we mean by rights?

Through our Age Demands Action campaign, older people have been asking for their rights to health care, right to property and pensions. What we mean by rights is exactly what we have been campaigning for. Below is a list of some other rights:

Freedom from violence: Many older people, especially older women, experience violence. Kenya has seen an upsurge in the number of brutal killings of older people, mostly women, accused of witchcraft.

Equality before the law: Lack of identity papers is one of the main barriers preventing older people from realising their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In Bolivia, census data showed that one in six older people had no documents for claiming the non-contributory pension.

Property: In many parts of the world, inheritance laws deny women the right to own or inherit property when their husband dies. Family members often evict them. In Tanzania, denial of inheritance and property rights is a major cause of disputes, particularly for older women.

Right to information: Information is often unavailable to older people. In Moldova, only one in ten of 500 grandparents caring for grandchildren had information about state provisions such as childcare services and free medical insurance.

Social security: Millions of older people have no pension or other regular income. In three communities in Zambia, only 4 per cent of older people received a pension, the majority of them men.

Work: Sometimes older people cannot get a job because they are considered too old. They may be forced to take low paid jobs that are unsafe or demeaning. In Peru, older people said that job advertisements often specified that applicants must not be older than 35.5

Health: Sometimes health services are out of reach to older people, or health workers refuse to treat them. In 15 communities in Mozambique, nearly nine in ten older people had to pay for healthcare that was legally free.

For more information and resources please visit

<http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/rights/>

<http://www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/towards-a-convention/>

Annex 3: Petition template

"We the undersigned believe older people everywhere must be included in society as equal citizens with equal rights. This is important because:

Age helps: older people are a resource for society: they work, care for relatives, and offer support through experience.

The world is ageing: by 2050 there will be more people over 60 than under 14 and 80% will be living in developing countries. If we continue to exclude such a growing part of the population, efforts to eliminate extreme poverty will not succeed.

Older people have rights too: I support the principle that everyone without distinction is entitled to the rights and freedoms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Every human has rights.

Action is needed today if older people are to live dignified, active, healthy and secure lives.

I call on my government and the international community to actively include older people in policies at home and internationally.

Name	Address	Country	Email	Signature

